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Mengele Lived Near the U.S. Embassy

To the Editor:

A. Dane Bowen Jr. (letter, Feb. 27) states that during his tenure as a political officer in the United States Embassy in Asunción, from Dec. 1, 1959, through Jan. 25, 1964, he strongly doubts that Josef Mengele was in the Paraguayan capital.

I have recently returned from a two-month trip to South America, during which I spent more than three weeks with Col. Alejandro von Eckstein, one of the co-sponsors for Dr. Mengele's citizenship papers in 1959. Today, Colonel von Eckstein is a ranking member of the Paraguayan intelligence service.

During extensive conversations about Dr. Mengele, Colonel von Eckstein told me that Dr. Mengele spent more time in Paraguay from 1960 through 1965 than at any other time. During that period, Dr. Mengele resided under his true name, in a house owned by the former chief of the Paraguayan Nazi Party. Dr. Mengele's residence was on Avenida General MacArthur, less than half a mile from the U.S. Embassy.

While in South America, I had access to Brazilian and Argentine intelligence and police files that confirm my conversations with the colonel.

Moreover, while Mr. Bowen states that throughout his assignment to the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay there was "never a mention of Mengele," this is contradicted by press reports in South American newspapers and magazines. From 1960 to 1964, numerous articles reported Dr. Mengele was indeed in Paraguay.

I am amazed that the Embassy official responsible for "knowing and reporting to Washington all political matters of interest to the U.S." never heard of Dr. Mengele in a capital that he says "did not keep secrets."

GERALD L. POSNER

New York, Feb. 27, 1985

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